

TASKS



BEFORE

APPS

G
DESIGNING
RIGOROUS LEARNING
IN A TECH-RICH CLASSROOM

MONICA BURNS

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INTRODUCTION

From the day I put pencil to paper to outline each of the chapters in this book to the moment this book sits in your hands, the landscape of digital tools has changed. Technology's rapid evolution over the course of months, not years, is a reminder of how important it is to keep our goals for student learning front and center. This book was designed to put the learning first, to help you leverage the power of technology to place tasks before apps.

As a classroom teacher, I was continually amazed by the possibilities a new website or app offered my students. Digital tools opened up a world of content for students to access and ways for them to explore and apply the information and ideas that were once confined to their textbooks. As educators, we have the opportunity to leverage digital tools to address more than a list of objectives—to teach the transferable skills we strive to ensure that each child masters.

Tasks Before Apps was designed to help educators take traditional lesson design to the next level by providing inspiration and actionable ideas for technology integration in K-12 classrooms. This book places emphasis on three overlapping, intertwined categories: creation, curiosity, and collaboration. As students create a product, they dive into content, demonstrate understanding, and make a shareable creation. When we honor and cultivate curiosity, students explore their personal interests, wonder about the world around them, and see our time together in the classroom

as relevant and purposeful. When students collaborate, they learn to think critically, compromise, and develop a skill set essential for success both inside and outside school.

This book outlines a way to examine your current practice and infuse tech-rich experiences to (1) turn students into creators, (2) honor students' curiosity, and (3) provide opportunities for collaboration. Although I've called out so many of my favorite digital tools throughout this book and included vignettes in which other educators share their own favorites, this book is designed to help you focus on your learning goals, design rigorous tasks, and choose the right tools for your students. It's not about the latest tablet or the fastest laptop but about designing learning experiences that use the power of technology to reach every learner. To that end, I've included forms and templates in Appendix A to support you in your planning and goal setting. (For added utility, these forms can be downloaded at <http://www.ascd.org/ASCD/pdf/books/Burns2017forms.pdf>. Use the password "Burns2017118019" to unlock the PDF.)

Digital tools let us capture student voice, change the way students interact with the world, and provide an audience for children of all ages. When technology is partnered with rich learning experiences in a thoughtful, purposeful manner, we can elevate traditional instructional practices to prepare students for the world of today and tomorrow.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Dr. Monica Burns is a curriculum and educational technology consultant, Apple Distinguished Educator, and founder of ClassTechTips.com. As a classroom teacher, Monica used one-to-one technology to create engaging, standards-based lessons for students. She has presented to teachers, administrators, and tech enthusiasts at numerous national and international conferences, including SXSWedu, ISTE, and EduTECH. She is a webinar host for SimpleK12 and a regular contributor to Edutopia. Monica is the author of *#FormativeTech: Meaningful, Sustainable, and Scannable Formative Assessment with Technology* (Corwin, 2017) and *Deeper Learning with QR Codes and Augmented Reality: A Scannable Solution for Your Classroom* (Corwin, 2016).

Monica visits schools throughout the United States to work with preK–20 teachers to make technology integration exciting and accessible. She also provides support to organizations using technology to reach children and families in need. Her mission is to help educators place tasks before apps and promote deeper learning with technology.

Visit ClassTechTips.com to find out more about working with Monica and her books and resources for educators.

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